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**An Analysis of Factors Related to Educational and Career Decision
Making of Upper Secondary Students**

by

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The objectives of this study are (1) to explain educational and career decision making from related factors, (2) to compare the strength of contribution such as background, personal, and environment factors to educational and career decision making, and (3) to analyze the causal relationships of related factors affecting educational and career decision making in male and female upper secondary students. The sample consisted of 1,163 10th (M.S.4), 11th (M.S.5), and 12th (M.S.6) grade students from upper secondary schools under the Department of General Education, Ministry of Education in the Bangkok Metropolis. Questionnaires and inventories were administrated for collecting data. The program SPSS/PC was used to analyze the descriptive statistics and hierarchical set multiple regression. The hierarchical set multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine the relative strength of different sets of independent variables. The program AMOS was also employed to construct the causal relationship model of educational and career decision making.

The research findings are summarized as follows :

1. The majority of upper secondary students (52.1 %) in formal education system took M.S. 6 equivalence examination, with 70% of the students passing the examination. Students generally reported that the persons who they need to

consult with and discuss educational/vocational choices are parents (43%), teachers (13%), relatives (7%), and peers (6%). Most students (55.4%) are primarily concerned with their abilities, interests, and aptitudes in educational/vocational choice. They are largely uncertain about both their educational decisions (51%), and vocational decisions (66%). However, most students (90%) reported that they intend to pursue their studies at the post secondary education level. The majority of students (48%) plan to work in the private sector.

2. Background, personal, and environment factors could explain 37% of the variance in educational and career decision making for male students, and 34% of the variance in educational and career decision making for female students. In particular, the personal factor contributes to career decision making the most, the background factor is second in terms of strength of contribution, and the environment factor is the least.

3. The proposed model of both male and female upper secondary students' educational and career decision making fits the data. Career decision making is the result of prior knowledge, autonomy, problem-solving ability, self-efficacy, and peer support which has direct influences on educational and career decision making for male students. There is a similarity between male and female models in educational and career decision making except prior knowledge which has no direct or indirect effect on female students' educational and career decision making. Furthermore, self-efficacy, a personal factor, is the most powerful influence on both male and female students' educational and career decision making.

Comparing the 3 dimensions of educational and career decision making (i.e., identity, educational - vocational information, and readiness in decision-making), educational - vocational information accounts for more variance from the three factors than do the other dimensions for male model. However, the three

factors could explain more variance in readiness in decision-making than do the other dimensions for female model.

Recommendations based on the findings are summarized as follows:

1. The findings might help teachers and counselors to determine which intervention or guidance would yield highest probability of right educational and career decision making. In addition, the career decision making inventory could serve as a diagnostic tool for students who have problems concerning career decision making (i.e., identity, information, and readiness). The inventory could be used to differentiate students having identity problems from those lacking educational/vocational information or those lacking readiness to decide.

2. Although teacher support has no direct and indirect effects on educational and career decision making, teachers could be more helpful to their students in career development in order to make a difference.

3. In this study, the causal relation between educational and career decision making and background, personal, and environmental factors was explored in cross-sectional research. Further studies should be designed in longitudinal or experimental research in order to effectively determine causal direction.

4. The future research should include different types of support in addition to different sources of support. In this study the amount of variance in career decision making explained by different sources of support is small.